"SHREK"

~ outline & notes ~

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by

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PROLOGUE: DIFFICULT BIRTH

1. ALTERED EARTH ~ Song: *"IT'S IN THE STARS"*

In a far isolated kingdom, a storm of thunder and lightning gathers in surrounding hills.

At the headwaters of a valley river, a strange mill (THE WORKS) uses waterfall power to drive medieval digging machinery. Loads of dirt are processed by alchemical means inside the odd hydraulic building. THE WORKS are managed by the KING's high counselor: the ROYAL MAGE (Alan Rickman). ROYAL MAGE has many ambitions and carries an impressive ring of keys.

ROYAL MAGE is using the KING's machinery in a personal search for gold. There is far more mountain than ore and far more is wasted than saved. R.M. is secretly minting coins in his own image which he hoards and uses to buy the loyalty of some of the KING's GUARDS.

A new coin becomes wedged in the machinery. The image of the ROYAL MAGE on the mangled coin is grotesquely distorted into an ogre-ish visage. The accident violently shudders the building and causes waste liquids from the refinery to spill and contaminate the river. A toxic cloud within the water moves downstream.

Unconcerned whether any of the mill's actions might be causing ill, the ROYAL MAGE flips the ruined coin to one of his bought guards, locks the workers inside and leaves.

The SPILL moves downstream.

2. WATER AND MIRRORS

The castle of the KING is on the same side of the river as the mill. A lone uneven cottage is across the water from it on the other side. A great dark forest is all around.

The slow movement of the SPILL through the river parallels actions on both shores. The contaminated water makes its way to the cup of a pregnant QUEEN and the ladle of a pregnant WOODCUTTER's WIFE.

The SPILL continues past the castle and cottage, expanding and diluting in strength as it goes. It heads down foaming rapid grades towards a peasant river community established on the same side of the river as the castle and mill. The RIVER TOWN of docks and boats is built in a bend of the river around a large natural monolith. The forest is cut back in square planted fields around its perimeter.

Rain begins to fall. Thunder and lightning are much nearer.

3. THE WITCH ~ Song: *"THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN"*
(NOTE: cross-cutting)

The storm breaks and rages. Thunderous lightning dances across the rain-pounded landscape.

Inside the castle the severe weather is naught but a rumor while across the river howling winds tear bits of thatch from the cottage roof. Rain gets in.

The QUEEN gives painful birth in her royal quarters under a team of purple-robed physicians. Mirrors and candles are everywhere. The KING leaves the room unable to bear sight of his royal wife's suffering.

The WOODCUTTER's WIFE gives painful birth in the rude, leaky cottage attended only by a MIDWIFE/WITCH. Action is silhouetted in fire light and reflected in a single dusty mirror. WOODCUTTER is on knees gripping his WIFE's hands in his.

The QUEEN dies but her strange baby girl lives.

The WOODCUTTER's WIFE dies but her strange baby boy lives.

The baby girl is quiet while the baby boy's chilling cries crack the cottage mirror. Baby boy's cries sound like a word shrilly repeated: *"SHREK! SHRE-E-EK!" ("WAH! WA-A-AH!")*

4. (SUPER TITLE IN BOLT OF LIGHTING WITH BOOMING 'THX' THUNDER: **"SHREK"**)

The WOODCUTTER's eyes distend in horror when he beholds his swaddled child. He stumbles outside into the storm.

The WITCH sings a mumbled cryptique like a lullaby in a manner that quiets the baby SHREK.

"Go-old and digging, mo-oney and pigging - fruiting fro-om the loin.
Ro-olling and guessing, no-othing is pressing; 'ware the o-other side o' the coin."

WITCH carries baby SHREK outside where the WOODCUTTER's body dangles by its neck from a rope silhouetted in a lightning flash.

Lighting strikes the cottage. In its burning light, The WITCH and baby SHREK disappear into the storm lashed forest while gnarled trees strain and bend out of their way. *(NOTE: Morph-edit perspectives and faces between dual births rather than hard-edit.)*

5. TITLES CONTINUE/PASSAGE OF TIME MONTAGE

("THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN" continues sung by incidental characters)

The KING'S GUARDS conduct carts through the subject RIVER TOWN and collect all mirrors by authority of royal edict. They are careful to avoid the bad luck of breakage. One of the soldiers is the same as earlier seen with ROYAL MAGE. The ruined gold coin is spent in RIVER TOWN.

Follow fate of the coin over a period of sixteen years. The gold disk (known in mercenary slang as a 'Gold Mage' or 'Mage') changes hands many times among the shops of the MERCHANT's CIRCLE established around the great standing stone.

Life in the RIVER TOWN gets progressively worse. Fish are less and less wholesome, crops are weird and stunted, people become sick from the water.

The original gold piece is worn down and tarnished. It becomes smoother and smoother, smaller and smaller and dirtier and dirtier until it resembles a near-worthless copper bit.

ACT I

~ Many years later ~

6. THE MINSTREL ~ Song: *"THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN" (Finish)*

The RIVER TOWN prepares for the sixteenth birthday of the "BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS". So beautiful (it is said) that she is protected from all mortal eyes in a great tall tower built specially for the purpose by her father the KING.

The festival is still a week away but already flowers, bunting, food and good cheer are piled in offering around a wooden FESTIVAL THRONE. The throne is set up on a step of the cobbled terrace surrounding the town monolith. Colorful ribbons entwine the great rock. Travelling performers are beginning to arrive for the event.

The tarnished and reduced coin is found between muddy cobbles in the street by a smudgy barefoot LITTLE URCHIN. When confronted by a gang of older boys the LITTLE URCHIN slips the coin unseen to a ragged MINSTREL (Paul Simon/Jethro Tull) tuning a lute in the town circle. "Hold this for me." The L.U. whispers.

LITTLE URCHIN pretends to still have coin and is chased off by group of older boys. They have shoes and he doesn't but he is faster and more clever.

MINSTREL suspects immediately the hidden gold and polishes it to luster on his sleeve and

finishes his song.

Something's been coming (flips coin) ... *and now it's here.*

MINSTREL ("LUTAR") deftly thumb-flips coin into a pocket and strolls away plucking his tune. He has two musical associates: a round, fat squeeze-box player ("BOLUX") and a tall, thin tumbling tambourine-and-bells man ("SQUINT"). They make reference to 'something' that has achieved too great a bulk, insatiable. They nod their heads upstream.

THE WORKS is an enormous operation now. Six churning water-wheels now stretch all the way across the front of the falls to a second, much larger building on the other side. Steam power has been added. A pile of cracked and leaking lead-lined barrels is stacked on the sight of the old burned down WOODCUTTER's cottage.

The size of the irregular 'bite' removed from the mountain by the primitive digging apparatus is much larger than before and riddled with supplementary shafts. It looks as though some great worm has been at work.

7. SHREK!

Some miles from the town, two characters exit a dim forest trail onto a long main road. Trees strain and bend away from their passage.

An enormous blob of a person with a cowl hooding his features walks dressed in a patched and stained peasant tunic. His great staff is a small tree and an old woman hangs on his arm.

The WITCH has been speaking a rhyme related to the MINSTREL's tune to her large travelling companion and continues.

"The world be hard and roads be long and ye shall have a place in song.
More than most, as ye shall see, choose, young SHREK, the way ye'd be."

The WITCH stays within the forest but her companion walks out onto the main road. The trees relax.

WITCH and forest trail vanish behind the huge hooded figure. He turns to see there is no way back. Curious forest animals have been following and watching and are still nearby. The strange person throws back his hood to survey the problem. It is, of course, a youthfully vigorous SHREK The young ogre cups massive hands to his mouth and bellows to the closed forest:

"WHAT ABOUT DINNER!"

Animals see his face, feel and smell the hot stenchy blast of his breath and react with wide-eyed horror. They all scamper hurriedly away.

SHREK's echo fades unanswered and he turns to the road again. It stretches endlessly in both long and lonely-looking directions.

"I'm hungry." He grumbles and rubs the great void of his stomach.

The CASTLE and its bridge lie in one direction while the bustling RIVER TOWN prepares for a festival in the other.

A light summer rain begins to fall.

8. THE APPRENTICE MAGE ~ Song: *"ALL I WANT TO DO IS FLY"*

Song content: flight, soaring, falling, up/down, high/low, ascend/descend, royal/common, birds, things flying, etc.

Inside the gold mill, inside the old tower office of the ROYAL MAGE (now mostly a storage room) a young APPRENTICE MAGE works alone drafting plans for yet more extensions to THE WORKS. The plans are staggering in their complexity. He finishes a series of difficult lines and takes lunch while waiting for the work to dry.

The APPRENTICE MAGE removes a personal project from a rough box. It is a small and delicate MODEL of a flying machine built like a bird, with wings of soldered brass and thinly shaved leather and with movable parts of polished hardwood. *(NOTE: reference da Vinci and the Gossamer Condor and Gossamer Albatross work of MacCready.)*

APPRENTICE MAGE shares his meager repast with ANAXIMANDER, the tower mouse.

APPRENTICE MAGE explains avian concepts of lift and propulsion to the tiny animal while they eat. ANAXIMANDER appears to get the basic idea as the MODEL's clever working parts are demonstrated in illustration of the idealistic young man's theories. A.M.'s desire to soar above his circumstance manifests as a clear obsession with the possibility of flight.

The door behind them bursts open and an older, fatter and more finely robed ROYAL MAGE storms in. Sparks, smoke and cinders backlight his explosive entrance. Items on shelves and tables are jarred roughly out of position. There are more and bigger keys on his belt ring than before.

The APPRENTICE MAGE nearly drops his precious model but recovers it before it strikes the floor.

ANAXIMANDER is gone.

The ROYAL MAGE grabs up the still wet plans and smears the finely ruled ink.

"The work must begin tomorrow!" The R.M. informs brusquely. "The moon is perfect!"
"Tomorrow!? But, you said ..."

APPRENTICE MAGE attempts to warn of dangers inherent in the new designs but R.M. hears none of it.

"Hush! And what is that toy doing here?" He indicates the model.
"It's a project of my own, sir. I work on it while the ink dries. Look!" He holds it up proudly. "It's an Aerodynamo!"
ROYAL MAGE just stares.
"A flying machine!" The APPRENTICE MAGE clarifies.
"That!?" The ROYAL MAGE looks askance. "Hardly. Lift is achieved through the accumulation of vegetable gasses in a bird's internal bladders." The R.M. pounds his own heaving mass and produces an accidental burp. "Excuse me. Wings are for forward and reverse thrust only. How are you going to get it in the air? You've made no provision in your design."
"Oh." The APPRENTICE MAGE looks on his marvelous design with real doubt.
The R.M. continues.
"You have the pinions mounted at *far* to steep an angle, the proportions are *totally* incorrect and, and, ..." He has just noticed the wet ink on his hands and robes. "You're fired. Clear out."
"What?"
"Now."

ROYAL MAGE exits, leaving door open because his hands are full of plans.

The APPRENTICE MAGE is left alone. He packs his meager belongings in a sack and prepares to vacate the premises.

A.M. calls for his little friend, ANAXIMANDER but there is too much noise from downstairs to hear a rattling, overturned teacup.

A.M. leaves the MODEL as a present at the top of the drafting table very near the unnoticed struggling cup.

APPRENTICE MAGE leaves and closes door behind him with a booming echo.

9. ANAXIMANDER

ANAXIMANDER finally frees himself from the overturned cup that had trapped him since the ROYAL MAGE's entrance.

He scurries to closed door but is unable to pass. He looks up at the open skylight high in the conical Old Tower roof. In desperation at being left behind ANAXIMANDER ascends the

drafting table to the abandoned MODEL. He undoes the wheel brake and the model begins to coast down the shallow slope of the drafting table. *(ANAXIMANDER's "CATCHING UP THEME" heard first)*

ANAXIMANDER peddles furiously and the tiny craft drops off the edge of the table. He spins downward but his little mouse feet keep slipping from the pedals. A draft of air blasts up from a grate set in the floor and gives him a boost. The wings grab air and ANAXIMANDER pulls up.

ANAXIMANDER spirals upward towards the open skylight and nearly misses everything in the room on his way up. Once out, the pedal chain slips and he stalls.

ANAXIMANDER plummets in a helical spin down the outside of the Old Tower towards the ground where the ROYAL MAGE is just exiting the building with the armload of plans. Two guards flank the doors unmoving. The little mouse pedals furiously. The chain catches again and he leans into the task.

Just before impact, the MODEL's internal flywheel reaches a sustaining speed and the wings grab air again. ANAXIMANDER pulls up.

ROYAL MAGE looks around at the peculiar noise and leaps with fear from ANAXIMANDER's path. R.M. lands in a muddy puddle of refinery leakage. R.M. stands in spluttering fury (assisted by fumbling guards) and looks after the flying MODEL while it bounces across treetops towards the castle. R.M.'s clothes disintegrate and fall from his body while his eyes show dawning comprehension. He rubs his chin in evil consideration of endless new possibilities.

ANAXIMANDER and MODEL ascend in a slow spiral around the CASTLE's tallest tower.

10. THE PRINCESS ~ Song: *"LOVE IS A TOWER TO THE SKY"*

The tall central tower is covered in thick ivy and spires up from the midst of the castle.

Motionless on horseback, a GREAT KNIGHT guards the portcullis of the only entrance.

This is where long ago the KING hid away his daughter and his shame. Deep in his royal bosom, the KING knows the PRINCESS' appearance is *somehow* his fault, somehow a punishment, a judgement upon him. He can't imagine what he could have done and spends much time in prayer and meditation now. The ROYAL MAGE is given more and more power and more and more keys.

KING visits the PRINCESS often. His love is as strong as his guilt and the private moments with his daughter are genuine and touching.

ANAXIMANDER buzzes by the tower's highest parapet window. A small balcony is shaded by a lattice work of criss-crossed masonry overgrown with a flowering vine. Several birds leave

perches there to chase after the flying mouse.

A conversation inside the tower continues. The KING paces in front of the window while talking and is the only character visible during the exchange. The cloistered PRINCESS senses she is 'different' in some peculiar way but is completely ignorant of mirrors and of what other girl's and women look like.

"Am I much like mother?" She asks.
"Not in all things."
"But many things? Father?" She presses.
"Yes." He smiles with a fond tear. "Many things."
Pause.
"I have heard you say mother was very beautiful." Silence. "Am I beautiful?"
The KING considers.
"You are more than beautiful. You are special."
"I am nearly a woman, father." She states a fact. "Shall I be married?"
"Only a great Prince would be worthy ... and they are scarce in these days."
"How will I know him?" She insists.
"He will be different from all others."
"Special?"
"You mock me, but come, the town prepares for your birthday. What would you have this year?"
"A wedding." Arms were folded.
"In some things you *exceed* your mother." The KING sighs. "I'm sorry, my dear, but I must return to the court. Think on a more ... practical gift."

The KING leaves her.

Alone, the PRINCESS cries. She stands in the vine latticed shadows of the high parapet attended by birds whom she has befriended over the years of her royal confinement. A summer storm can be heard and seen forming in the high misty ranges.

The PRINCESS reaches a delicate gloved hand through the architectural and botanical weaving and the birds take turns perching on a finger. They look into her truly beautiful eyes through the stone and vines that hide her and bring her news in the way of scents and songs and small tokens flown from afar.

She gives to her favorite (a great RAVEN who brings her the largest and loveliest things) the silken handkerchief she has lately dried her lonely tears with and tells the avian messenger to:

"Take this to my great Prince."

The bird flies away with the task and token and the PRINCESS looks from her high prison upon the distant town. The great central rock is partly entwined in bright 'May Ribbons' for her

birthday.

11. THE "*RÊK*"

Because of its size, shape and position, the great stone that stands at the center of the RIVER TOWN has several tales and legends associated with it. Many of these are the subject of minstrel songs, puppet shows and troubadour events. Travelling performers would contain references in their repertories. Locally, it is known as the *Rêk*. The ribbon-wrapping ceremony lasts a full week until the main celebration when the rock will be mostly covered. Ribbon-wrapping ceremony supplies a visual 'clock' for the week.

The RAVEN perches on the great stone and looks briefly for a Prince there before flying on.

12. THE CON

KING is in court meting out local justice and signing papers. He is brought water that is full of oily swirling sediments. KING angrily sends for ROYAL MAGE.

ROYAL MAGE enters smugly with a roll of plans. KING shows filthy water and demands to know why the "Royal Water Purification Plant" is not working better than it is. (NOTE: KING has always been led to believe THE WORKS is something other than it is.)

R.M. has by now replaced his corroded clothes with even finer regalia and glibly explains that lack of sufficient 'mineral assistance' is to blame. He unfolds plans to increase the availability of such 'mineral assistance' through additional digging and construction.

"I have the plans right here, Sire."

13. ANAXIMANDER & THE RAVEN

ANAXIMANDER barely keeps the MODEL above water in crossing the river and is chased by toothy jumping fish all the way.

The RAVEN flies easily in a comfortable airstream.

ANAXIMANDER pilots an erratic looping path that accidentally buzzes the unaware RAVEN and causes it to drop the silk handkerchief. The sheer cloth becomes draped over the front of the flying MODEL and ANAXIMANDER flies blind. Angry RAVEN pursues. ***(NOTE: accelerated use of ANAXIMANDER'S CATCHING-UP THEME).***

FLYING CHASE begins. RAVEN follows the blindly flying ANAXIMANDER into woods. ANAXIMANDER unaware of pursuit. Chase proceeds unchecked and a large OWL is rudely awakened. Chase bursts out over a road with OWL now in hot but unobserved pursuit of the RAVEN and ANAXIMANDER.

14. THE PLAY

LUTAR, BOLUX & SQUINT are a Greek Chorus who will occasionally break frame to lyricize prophesied events.

Ragged but joyful, LUTAR dances through the crowded MERCHANT's CIRCLE playing a peculiar, stringed instrument that allows the simultaneous playing of complex harmonies with clever fingering. Sometimes a third hand is required from one of his skilled associates.

"There are two sides to every tale - two sides to every song,
Two ways to know just which way to go - and two ways to get it all wrong."

Further lyrics describe the Hero's ignorance of his mythical significance and of a guardian Witch's mysterious instructions.

The MINSTRELS are followed by long squealing strings of the town's children. They are led to the FESTIVAL THRONE where a puppet stage is set up. A performance is about to begin.

"Inside and Outside are all sides in one -
and two sides apart are two sides undone."

Two crude wooden puppets appear on the small stage. A large hooded figure with a great staff walks with a witch figure. The children clap and squeal for the favorite show.

MINSTREL voices overlap and become WITCH's voice as scene changes.

15. SHREK

A strange sound in the air gets Shrek's attention and he observes the aerial approach of the MODEL (piloted by ANAXIMANDER), followed by the RAVEN followed by the great pursuing OWL.

The FLYING CHASE barrels at high speed towards SHREK.

"Dinner." SHREK grins and opens his huge-tusked and saliva-stringed maw.

RAVEN catches up to ANAXIMANDER and snatches back the handkerchief. At the same time they both see the horrible thing in the road and split away to the right and left narrowly missing SHREK's great cavernous mouth.

The OWL, however, is too large to quickly change direction and flies deep into SHREK's throat. The mighty jaws shut.

CHOMP! GULP!

SHREK swallows and belches feathers.

ANAXIMANDER and the RAVEN circle overhead and split off in two opposite directions.

SHREK catches a glimpse of a furiously peddling little mouse inside a strange glinting 'bird' and chases it with his staff laughing and leaping down the road after it.

SHREK stops suddenly in mid leap, his flaring nostrils all aquiver with the scent of cooking food. He abandons his aimless pursuit of ANAXIMANDER and leaves the road. He follows his nose and comes upon a PEASANT in a new mown field asleep under a cart piled with the hay of his morning's labor. A charred and spitted fowl smokes over a small fire. There is a partial loaf of hard-bread and a dark stoppered bottle.

The PEASANT awakes and is frightened off by SHREK's monstrous appearance.

SHREK decides the food isn't 'done' enough and breathes fire on it until it is charred to a crisp.

> "This 'living-in-the-world' stuff is easy." SHREK decides and downs the crispy roasted fowl (bones and all) in a single gulp. "Just take what you find!" *(NOTE: Learns later that 'Find' and Need' are different in this song.)*

SHREK chews and wonders and chews and burps while looking on the wide world around him. Where and what is his place here?

The rain becomes a thunder storm and SHREK perks up. He loves storms.

The LITTLE URCHIN crests a hill behind SHREK and dives unseen into the haycart to hide.

SHREK eats lightning.

LITTLE URCHIN observes the act with open-mouthed excitement.

BULLIES who were chasing LITTLE URCHIN crest hill and run into SHREK, skidding in new mud right up to the huge thing.

SHREK belches electricity at them, scorching the surprised BULLIES.

BULLIES run back to town screaming in terror about a fire-breathing ogre.

A yapping dog chases a buzzing ANAXIMANDER across distant B.G.

LITTLE URCHIN is discovered hiding in haycart by SHREK.

SHREK holds the LITTLE URCHIN high by the scruff of the child's thread-bare jacket and considers eating the small boy. SHREK is always seeking to fill a great inner void that even lightning only momentarily satisfies.

LITTLE URCHIN is totally unafraid of proximity to so horrible an ogre and suggests to SHREK that SHREK might be the great Hero from the song.

SHREK pauses to seriously consider this. LITTLE URCHIN capitalizes on the moment.

"It's nearly the Princess' birthday!" The LITTLE URCHIN indicates the distant ribboned rock. "There's a big festival this week!"

SHREK looks to the far castle and the high ivied tower. Bright colorful pennants snap unheard in distant winds. The vision is framed in a brief blue-sky break in the storm clouds.

"Is there food?" SHREK wants to know.
"More than you've ever seen!" The LITTLE URCHIN promises.

SHREK's great hunger leads him on.

16. WHAT IS A PRINCE?

RAVEN is far afield. It observes various Princely young men who exhibit decidedly un-Princely behavior. RAVEN flies on with his silk token, ... looking, looking.

The RAVEN is seen flying across the B.G. now and then with an ever more ragged silk handkerchief. ANAXIMANDER is similarly seen in his erratic quest for the APPRENTICE MAGE. Occasionally, the two searchers cross their flying paths. Gag time.

17. FULFILLMENT

SHREK and LITTLE URCHIN approach RIVER TOWN where TOWNSPEOPLE are bolted and shuttered indoors against news of the 'fire-breathing ogre'.

Preparations for the PRINCESS' birthday lie abandoned everywhere. Puppet props lie scattered on the ground. A handsome puppet Hero lies on the cobbles with his wooden mouth open and a stick of prop lightning partially consumed.

The FESTIVAL THRONE is heaped with bountiful local offerings. There is much food and drink. SHREK and the LITTLE URCHIN help themselves.

"This is more like it." SHREK approves of the layout and pats his little companion on the head. "Good boy."

LITTLE URCHIN has never had access to so much food. SHREK is already a great hero to him. *(REVIEW: Harpo's ship-board banquet scene in A NIGHT AT THE OPERA.)*

SHREK's capacity is monstrous. Entire smoked joints of beef and whole hams follow pies, fruits

and vegetables (in no discerning order) down a bottomless gullet.

LITTLE URCHIN and SHREK have impromptu 'gross out' contest and show each other what's in their mouths (a 'see-food' contest). SHREK wins.

The damage to their unprotected property finally gets the TOWNSPEOPLE to show their faces.

LITTLE URCHIN takes the stage and excitedly tells them of SHREK's eating of the lightning.

"He ate the lightning! He is the Hero!"

TOWNSPEOPLE push forward an ELDER who approaches hat-in-hand with a request for proof.

"Do the lightning bit again." The ELDER asks politely.
"I must be struck first." SHREK answers and folds his mighty arms arrogantly.

WHAP!

"There's a strike for you!" An immense WASHER WOMAN swings her great tub paddle at him from behind. "Ha! I knew it! Freeloaders!" She swats SHREK again.

TOWNSPEOPLE's suspicion and fear become mirth and ridicule. They reject the LITTLE URCHIN's 'ridiculous idea' out of hand and move in on the bottomless eating machine called SHREK.

SHREK and LITTLE URCHIN are turned out in song. SHREK doesn't mind being pelted with vegetables and eats the splattered stuff right from his tunic.

18. Song: "GO AWAY!"

(sung by various TOWNSPEOPLE while shoving SHREK and LITTLE URCHIN around MERCHANT'S CIRCLE.)

You may be big! You may be strong!
You sure are ugly and you have to move along!

GO AWAY!

(SHREK and LITTLE URCHIN hide someplace and are discovered.)

You come in here with tricks! You spoil our holiday!
You smell just like a stable so you have to go away!

GO AWAY!

(SHREK and LITTLE URCHIN hide someplace else and are discovered again.)

You look like a tramp! You look like trouble!
You might eat all our children so *move* it! On the double!

GO AWAY! GO AWAY! GO AWAY!

19. SKID ROW

SHREK blames LITTLE URCHIN for nasty turn of events. L.U. deeply hurt by the insults from his hero.

SHREK and LITTLE URCHIN pushed farther and farther to the outskirts of the town by verses of song and waves of angry TOWNSPEOPLE.

The violent 'Social Sweeping' also catches up an old STREET DRUNK who moves too slow to avoid the 'net'.

LITTLE URCHIN despises the much older man and apparently knows him as UNCLE BERTIE.
(NOTE:" Fagin ~ Artful Dodger image.)

The three rogues find themselves deep in the dirtier side of RIVER TOWN. Skid Row. There is much sick coughing and darkness. Chickens and animals wander in the muddy lanes among leaning and decrepit buildings. The three shelter in a filthy pigsty from the rain.

UNCLE BERTIE won't drink water because of something he saw that changed the river's color years ago. He introduces SHREK to liquor and tells a tale of alcoholic vision in shadows and cracked lantern light.

LITTLE URCHIN leaves, disgusted that SHREK would join in drunken revelry with the detestable UNCLE BERTIE. SHREK has an enormous capacity for the cheap crockered stuff.

Days pass in alcoholic stupor while the LITTLE URCHIN frets on the edges. The town is about to burst with preparations for the PRINCESS' impending celebration. The great central rock is nearly covered by bright twisted ribbons.

Food is easier to steal now and the quality of the LITTLE URCHIN's takings improve as the celebration day approaches.

LITTLE URCHIN still believes that SHREK is the Hero. He still believes the evidence of his own eyes in the face of adult ridicule.

ANAXIMANDER in forest, stuck high in a tree, repairing a torn wing with a leaf.

L.U. gets SHREK through his first hangover. SHREK vomits. L.U. 'breaks' and stands on the collapsed SHREK's chest to wave a stern finger of admonishment at the sick monster. SHREK

listens with drunken attention and agrees that he is a terrible thing. SHREK cries. UNCLE BERTIE leaves, disgusted with mushy turn of events.

LITTLE URCHIN is sorry he hurt SHREK's feelings but it was for the big galoot's own good.

L.U. tries to imagine what the qualities and looks of a Hero Prince are and plans a triumphant return of the 'True Hero' on the PRINCESS' birthday. LITTLE URCHIN rebuilds SHREK from the ground up.

This is where the DONKEY is acquired. DONKEY has a checkered military history and tells tales of past glory that are always very brief and have a pointed, sarcastic moral. The advice is always good but given with such attitude that someone as hungry and impatient as SHREK finds it 'hard to swallow'. But, in order to obtain any of its benefit (like any good medicine) he *must* swallow it.

SHREK and DONKEY don't get along.

"Some steed." SHREK snorts at the pathetic creature.

The DONKEY rolls a slow, red eye at SHREK, holds his gaze ... and spits a stream of tobacco juice across SHREK's tunic.

"Some Hero." It answers back.

SHREK is prepared in 'proper Prince fashion' by the LITTLE URCHIN for his grand entrance on the now cleaned and scrubbed DONKEY. Even with a bath, the animal is still unattractive.

The Hero Party moves from Skid Row towards the center of town and the great rock always in sight over the buildings.

(NOTE: Cross-cut with Puppet Show.)

A puppet Hero on a puppet Steed moves across the ragged stage. The entertainment is set up in the shade of the great rock. The steps of the cobbled central terrace are seats in tiers for an audience with their back to the stone.

SHREK and his Hero Party approach from an alley. LITTLE URCHIN is all dressed up for the occasion as well. The image is ludicrous. As they approach the thickening festivities, the crowd turns to laugh at their comical, clown-like aspect. A few copper coins are flipped their way and then they are forgotten again. All attention is on the Puppet Show.

SHREK and his Hero Party enter the open area between the great rock and the back of the audience.

There is an explosion upstream at THE WORKS that is ignored by a populace used to such occurrences. The ground trembles a little.

The puppet prop representing the *Rêk* begins to fall over, all by itself. "Not yet!" One of the PUPPETEERS hisses.

LITTLE URCHIN notes that the real *Rêk* is also falling. No one else notices.

LITTLE URCHIN slaps the DONKEY's rump and propels SHREK into the path of the falling *Rêk*. SHREK looks up and reacts wide-eyed to falling stone. DONKEY also reacts and scoots out from under SHREK and away. SHREK closes his eyes, grits his teeth and raises his huge hands high overhead.

The PUPPETEER with the Hero puppet on his hand reflexively raises his hand to stop the falling prop. The puppet Hero catches the falling puppet *Rêk*. The staged act appears to make a much larger sound than such a puppet act should make. The PUPPETEERS look to their sound effects man who just shrugs.

TOWNSPEOPLE turn from play to see SHREK in heroic attitude holding the actual fallen *Rêk*. The *Rêk*'s weight has driven SHREK hard into the ground past his knees - like a hammered nail.

After a moment of stunned silence, TOWNSPEOPLE burst into unanimous applause.

PUPPETEERS, unaware of the actual reason for the tremendous acclaim, congratulate themselves backstage on their great success.

A crowd of children still clustered around the FESTIVAL THRONE look silent and wide-eyed up at their salvation. The *Rêk* has flattened some of the children's untamed mops of curly hair but was stopped before it could touch any upturned foreheads.

Before this moment, it was always perfectly obvious to the TOWNSPEOPLE that, however unusual he might be, SHREK was *still* just a boy. All that has changed now.

SHREK's awkward posture and bearing had been a dead give-a-way to his earlier immaturity. After being hammered by the *Rêk*, he walks differently, more like a 'Man'. More like a 'Hero'. Unlike the accident long ago that bent a coin to his image, this current semi-natural/semi-artificial 'accident' has straightened SHREK out.

The *Rêk* is bested in a manner that coincides 'enough' with events in the 'Hero' song to change a few minds. And then a few more. Hell, all this 'birthday' stuff is just lying around anyway, ... let's have a *party!* **Yeah!**

SHREK proclaimed hero.

The ground rumbles some more. All fall silent and turn to look upstream. Part of the badly eroded mountain collapses and a great black cloud rises in the air from it.

ROYAL MAGE observes disaster and SHREK's activities from a distance through a telescope and rubs his chin in disturbed, evil consideration.

20. Song: *"Am I Worthy?"*

SHREK's own staff is wedged in his place and SHREK steps away from the fallen stone amid thunderous cheers. A new staff of excellent workmanship is made for him on the spot.

Children play in the pair of deep holes made, trying to match their tiny feet with SHREK's great footprints.

LITTLE URCHIN is gone. SHREK scans the jubilant faces in the crowd around him to no avail. His little friend is nowhere to be seen. He feels alone amid all the happy crowd, alone at his own party. This makes him a little sad but he doesn't know why.

"Maybe he *is* the one!" Someone hollers.
"Maybe he *is!* Maybe he *is!*" It goes around the town.

SHREK is distracted by his instant celebrity from the strange new pain in his heart. He thinks about the awesome responsibility that has come with his stepping forward to fulfill the prophecy of the Hero song. *Is* he the one? He decides he is, dammit.

SHREK has an *absentee* duet with the distant en-towered PRINCESS while being ushered by a grateful TOWN THRONG through the MERCHANT's CIRCLE.

SHREK sings.

"Am I good enough?
Am I strong enough?
Am I big enough ... for this?"

"Am I good enough?
Am I right enough?
Am I the one ... for this?"

"Am I worthy? Am I ready?
Am I sturdy? Am I steady?"

"Am I the one ... for you?" *(Sung together)*

Song content: Towers, Bridges, Monument-Building, Worship, 'Getting across', 'Getting things across', 'Getting things together', Marriage, Fate, Destiny, *BlahBlahBlah* ...

The LITTLE URCHIN snaps his dirty fingers from atop a lamp post and breaks SHREK's pleasant reverie.

"Hero?!" He questions sarcastically.

All activity stops at the impertinence.

"He ate the lightning!" Someone asserts on faith.
"He fought the *Rêk!*" Someone else says.
"Ha!" The LITTLE URCHIN waves a pair of fingers at the prematurely celebrating crowd. "That's just *two* parts of the song!"
"*Oh, yeah.*" Crowd remembers.
"There's still the Dragon!" L.U. reminds.
"*That's right! 'Ray!*" The easily motivated crowd starts shouting and dancing again. "*The Dragon! The Dragon! 'Ray!*"
"Dragon?" SHREK asks a little crossly, hands on hips. "What about my party? I'm the Stone Hero. Remember?"

Apparently there's something in the song about a big party at the happy end of things.

"Dragon first. Party later." LITTLE URCHIN descends from lamp post.

LITTLE URCHIN points to a rocky island splitting the river current a little ways off from town. A thin wisp of dark black smoke rises there.

"He lives over there. I'll take you. Come on. Hero."

More 'Hero Doubters' raise their voices.

"He's too ugly to be the Hero Prince." Some declare. "Too lumpy. Too green." etc.

Crowd follows Hero Party as far as the river's edge. The ground on the island appears to be scorched and smoking. There are numerous bleached bones.

MINSTRELS sing joyful lyrics about all the possible awful ways SHREK might end up and agree in song with TOWNSPEOPLE to "Wait here!" for the triumphant return.

End Act I

ACT II

21. THE DRAGON ~ Song: *"Why Me?"* (Last-Beast-howling-at-the-moon-song)

On the Island of the Dragon, the APPRENTICE MAGE tends an iron cauldron of a bubbling herbal potion.

A DRAGON (John Cleese) huddles in an upright sitting posture under a blanket worn like a shawl. He sniffles over the potent fumes being mixed for his comfort.

The APPRENTICE MAGE has been sharing some of the DRAGON's cave space. There are rough drawings stuck up on the walls with resin that compare the wings of birds and dragons. Several rough partial models lie here and there.

A conversation is in progress.

> "Gas bladders?!" The dragon takes umbrage. "R-r-ridiculous. Bladders are for fire. Nothing more. It's the wings that do all the work!" The DRAGON attempts a serious demonstration but winces in pain under the effort. "Ow. Blast. In any event they most definitely *used* to do the work, I can tell you. *Harrumph.*" He thinks seriously for a moment. "I should like to have seen your model. Hold up." He sniffs the air. "Company." Sniffs again. "And ugly, too, by the waft of him."

SHREK, LITTLE URCHIN & DONKEY arrive on island.

SHREK, LITTLE URCHIN and DONKEY meet DRAGON and APPRENTICE MAGE.

Subject of battle discussed.

APPRENTICE MAGE offers solution of a mock battle. DRAGON unhappy with option.

> "Oh, bother!" The dragon folds his arms and coughs a little blue flame. "That is *not* the way one goes out." He coughs some more. **"Dragons don't die!** Father used to say. **They explode!**" The DRAGON sniffles with affliction. "What a fireball *he* was. Ah, me. Always *thought* I'd go out fighting. Bloody hell. Too sick and old now to make a proper job of it." Shakes his head. "No. This is all wrong. I'll not be seen in public like that. I'd be embarrassed. Lord knows *what* I'd do then. No, I say! You can't make me."

> "And anyway, ..." The LITTLE URCHIN reminds. "The song says ya' gotta *beat* 'im! Not *pretend* to beat 'im!"
> "It doesn't say *how*, though." A.M. points out.

APPRENTICE MAGE offers new solution of an arm-wrestling match with some 'Special Effects' thrown in to make it appear that much more is happening than really is.

SHREK and the DRAGON face each other across a great flat boulder. The match begins. LITTLE URCHIN sits alone with his back to it all, frowning.

A.M. gathers a sack of supplies and ascends the mountain assisted by the DONKEY.

ANAXIMANDER buzzes erratically in his repaired craft chased by birds across the B.G.

RAVEN with silk handkerchief also flies across B.G. in a different direction.

SHREK easily wins match.

Crowd on shore impressed by A.M.'s ambiguous pyrotechnic spectacle.

"There." SHREK folds his arms at LITTLE URCHIN. "I beat the Dragon."

LITTLE URCHIN not satisfied but able to admit its disappointing truth.

"Well, ..." L.U. becomes cynical. "It's obvious that 'Hero' is just another word for 'Grownup'."

Song: *"GROWNUP ANGLES"* (duet with APPRENTICE MAGE as counterpoint to arm-wrestling match ~ 'Math', the 'Universe' and 'God' song).

"Best two out of three?" The DRAGON flexes his sore arm. "I almost had you there, you know."

SHREK and DRAGON vie again just for the heck of it and again SHREK triumphs.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" The DRAGON cedes once more. "The wings! The wings! Watch the wings!"

A.M.'s mock battle on the mountain-top is a big success.

All but SHREK sleep afterward in cave slightly affected by the fumes from the DRAGON's TONIC.

SHREK walks away from snoring cave unaffected and unable to sleep.

He comes across the RAVEN and its cloth both caught in a thorn bush. SHREK frees the frantic bird and it flies frightened away with the PRINCESS' token.

SHREK finds a soft patch of giant mushrooms and lies down with his head on a rotted log that crunches slightly to contour to his rough skull. He watches the stars and falls asleep.

SHREK has a NIGHTMARE about love, acceptance and responsibility cast in the symbols of the song and his journey so far.

RAVEN watches from afar while SHREK tosses and turns and grunts and sweats. The RAVEN lands in the tree over SHREK's sleeping head and contemplates the horrible thing that had set

him free. RAVEN drops the remains of the PRINCESS' tattered cloth on SHREK's face.

SHREK's NIGHTMARE improves. The dawn comes and SHREK awakes, a changed ogre. He looks on the tattered cloth and thinks he sees a pair of lovely eyes in their smudges and wrinkles. RAVEN flaps around SHREK's head excitedly and flies a short distance away, cawing.

End Act II

ACT III

22. RETURN

TOWNSPEOPLE encamped on shore awake and witness SHREK's exit from the water.

"He *is* the one!" They cry. "He *is* the one!"

LITTLE URCHIN and DONKEY bring the boat back across behind him.

RAVEN flies far ahead while SHREK is paraded back to town atop the DONKEY led by L.U.

23. CONFRONTATION

When the town is reached, ROYAL MAGE is slouched comfortably in the relocated FESTIVAL THRONE amid a small armed complement of Royal Guards. They are helping themselves to the PRINCESS' birthday offerings.

ROYAL MAGE orders SHREK's arrest in the name of the KING. A paper edict refers to SHREK's complicity in recent disastrous events.

"For wanton destruction of property."

SHREK handily defeats the clot of armored dolts.

WITCH and MINSTREL observe from opposite sides of the town circle.

"Fools rush in and offer up chains forgetting they face the lord of the rains,
Iron and steel canna' hold Good and bind him no better than water would. "

"Sun and Moon and Standing Stone, One and Two no more alone.
None have eyes that see so long, time to finish out the song."

The TOWNSPEOPLE have been "going with the flow" and "following the stream" until SHREK shows them that "currents can be crossed", something they've known all along. *(NOTE: Wizard Of Oz's "You've always had the power to go home.")*